



## Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations - Infantry

Battle Road will involve an extensive schedule of historic weapons firing demonstrations featuring 18th century small arms and artillery. All firing demonstrations will be done according to National Park Service black powder safety regulations, under the direct supervision of certified NPS Black Powder Safety Officers (BPSO's) who will have the final say on the conduct of all historic weapons firing demonstrations. Safety is our primary concern, and our common goal.

Before a unit can participate in the Battle Road event, each unit commander must sign a Historic Weapons Firing Permit (included in this document). The permit must be signed by the unit commander and returned to the event Black Powder Safety Officer by mail or fax two weeks prior to the event. In signing the permit, the unit commander indicates that he/she has read and understands the regulations, has communicated the same to his/her troops and will comply with them fully.

### Acceptable Weapon Types

Only reproduction firearms may be used at this event. The use of original firearms is prohibited.

Reproduction small arms that will be allowed for this event are:

- Early to mid-18th century flintlock muskets, fusils, or fowling pieces.
- British Long Land Pattern
- British Short Land Pattern
- French Charleville

Reproduction small arms that will not be allowed for this event are:

- Pistols
- Blunderbusses
- 18th century flintlock rifles
- Percussion-cap weapons

Prohibited weapons brought on site will be returned to the owner's vehicle, or secured by the NPS and returned after the event.

### Weapon Safety and the Public

To ensure the safety of participants and the many thousands of visitors who attend Battle Road, a high degree of weapon discipline is expected of each and every participant.

- All weapons will remain under physical control of its owner at all times.
- No weapon is to be left unattended.
- Visitors are not allowed to handle or touch a loaded weapon.
- Visitors may touch an unloaded weapon so long as the owner maintains physical control of it. **DO NOT HAND YOUR WEAPON TO VISITORS.**
- Participants under the age of 16 may not handle weapons (firearms or edged weapons).

- NEVER point your weapon (firearm or edged weapon) at anyone at anytime.

### **Appropriate Drill Manuals**

Appropriate drill manuals will be used by all participants handling/demonstrating historic weapons at the event. Acceptable manuals are:

- 1764 Manual Exercise
- Pickering's
- Von Steuben's (not actually appropriate for 1775, but acceptable on grounds of safety)

### **Ammunition**

- All black powder brought into the park must be in the form of prepared cartridges and will be under NPS control when not actually in use during a demonstration. Bulk or loose black powder is absolutely prohibited.
- Cartridges will contain no more than the maximum load size for the weapon being carried.
  - "Brown Bess" or Charleville musket: no more than **125 FFg**.
- Cartridges containing any amount of **FFFg** powder are strictly prohibited and will not pass inspection.
- Cartridges containing flour, oatmeal, or any other inappropriate substance are strictly prohibited and will not pass inspection.
- Cartridge tubes will be constructed of sturdy paper only. Cartridges containing paper clips, tape, or staples are strictly prohibited and will not pass inspection.
- Powder contained in powder horns is strictly prohibited.
- Participants under age 16 may not handle powder.

### **Ammunition Storage**

- All cartridges will have been made prior to the unit's arrival in the park.
- The ammunition for each unit will be carried onto the event site in a spark-proof pass box, clearly labeled as belonging to that particular unit.
- The ammunition box for each unit will be turned over to a BPSO for inspection first thing in the morning at the appropriate depot (see depot schedule) and secured by the NPS until needed for a demonstration. At that time, the unit will detach members who will meet a BPSO at the appropriate depot. The necessary amount of cartridges will be distributed for the demonstration.
- Left over cartridges will be returned to the depot following the demonstration.
- Individuals may not carry their own supply of ammunition unless issued for a demonstration from their unit's supply.

### **Inspections**

- All small arms used in firing demonstrations will be inspected by a BPSO once in the morning to ensure serviceability of the weapon, and then just prior to and immediately after every firing demonstration to ensure the weapon is clear.
- Weapons that pass the first morning inspection will be "tagged" by the NPS.
- **Inspection for the Provincial forces will be from 9:30 – 10:00 in front of Hartwell Tavern.**
- **Inspection for Crown forces will be from 10:00 – 10:30 in front of the Captain William Smith House.**
- Weapons must meet the following standards to pass inspection

1. secured flashguard and hammer stall
2. no cracks or splits in the stock
3. furniture and barrel fit securely to stock
4. no missing stock pins or screws
5. lock works smoothly
6. half-cock position works properly
7. flint is secured by leather or lead
8. steel and spring are in good condition
9. barrel free from visible dents or cracks
10. no excessive rust or corrosion on the barrel, lock and touch hole
11. no fouling in the barrel or on the lock\*

Weapons that fail inspection may not be carried on the field. The owner must return the weapon to his/her vehicle or it will be secured by the NPS and returned at the end of the event.

\*In regards to fouled barrels, this applies only to the first inspection before any firing takes place. A fouled weapon indicates a poorly maintained weapon and an irresponsible owner. Both are undesirable at this event. Facilities for weapon maintenance and repair on site are extremely limited. Therefore, make sure your weapon is in good working order before you arrive.

### **Firing Procedures**

- All firing demonstrations taking place on park property may only be done under the direct supervision of a Certified BPSO.
- Ramrods may not be drawn on the field during firing demonstrations. Loading will be accomplished by pouring the powder down the barrel and securing the paper – as in a reenactment.
- For protection from flash burns, all demonstrators firing black powder firearms will wear natural fiber, long-sleeved outer garments or full uniforms as appropriate to their historical impression.
- No soldier may carry a loaded weapon when crossing over stone walls or passing through woods, as doing so may cause an accidental discharge of the weapon. Officers, when leading their troops over or through the aforementioned obstacles, will either order a volley to empty weapons or have their troops dump charges and priming.
- Range safety standards will be observed at all times. Firing will commence or cease at the discretion of the supervising BPSO.

### **Misfire Procedures**

#### **Failure to spark:**

1. Call out “misfire”
2. Return to the priming position
3. Check priming and flint. Wipe down the steel. If working with the flint, attach the hammerstall and dump priming.
4. Re-prime if necessary
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

#### **Flash in the pan:**

1. Call out “misfire”

2. Return to the priming position
3. Half-cock the piece, and reattach the hammerstall.
4. Pick out the touch-hole, wipe off the steel and flint and re-prime.
5. Return to the shoulder position and continue the firing procedure when ordered to do so by your company officer.

If, after following these procedures, the weapon still misses fire, you may retry three more times. If the weapon still will not fire, dump the charge and priming. The weapon is now out of the action. You may fall to the rear to assist officers in relaying messages etc.

### **Edged Weapons**

- Edged weapons (swords, bayonets, knives, hatchets, spontoons, halberds etc.) may be drawn and brandished in a safe and prudent manner, when the bearer and the weapon are behind a barrier in a secure area out of the reach of visitors, i.e. officers carrying swords during the tactical demonstration, or infantrymen in a bayonet demonstration).
- At no time may participants engage in simulated combat with edged weapons or simulated edged weapons.
- When not behind a barrier, out amongst visitors, swords, knives, bayonets and the like may not be fully drawn. They may be partially drawn enough to expose some of the blade for visual inspection for interpretive purposes, but no visitor may touch the blade.
- Soldiers on sentry duty may fix bayonets but must keep the musket in a vertical position and the bearer must maintain control of the weapon.
- At no time may muskets be fired with the bayonet fixed.



## **Historic Black Powder Weapons Firing Permit/ Battle Road**

Before a unit can participate in a living history event involving historic black powder weapons at Minute Man NHP, each unit commander must sign a Historic Weapons Firing Permit, which includes a copy of the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations. This permit must be signed by the unit commander and returned to the event Black Powder Safety Officer by mail or fax two weeks prior to the event. The regulations are also available as a PDF file at

<http://www.nps.gov/mima/supportyourpark/reenactor-resource.htm>

Mail the completed permit to:  
Historic Weapons Supervisor  
Minute Man National Historical Park  
174 Liberty St.  
Concord MA.  
01742  
Or fax to: (978) 318 – 7800

Unit Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Commander's Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Mailing Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City / State / Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone: (home) \_\_\_\_\_ (work) \_\_\_\_\_ (cell) \_\_\_\_\_  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please tell us about your unit's drill, weaponry, and the kinds of historic weapons demonstration programs you like to do.

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In signing this permit, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Historic Black Powder Weapons Safety Regulations and have communicated the same to all participating members of my unit and will comply with them fully.

Commander's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Historic Weapons Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Battle Road Ammunition Depot Schedule

### **Depot # 1 (Colonial)**

#### **McHugh Barn (behind Hartwell Tavern)**

8:00 a.m. – Depot opens

9:30 a.m. - Depot closes.

If for any reason you arrive after this time, it is your responsibility to find a Safety Officer in order to inspect and secure your ammunition in the magazine shed.

1:15 p.m. – Units detach one or two members to McHugh Barn to pick up ammunition boxes and distribute to troops

1:30 p.m. – Battalion formation for Tactical Demonstration.

3:00 p.m. – Post demonstration inspection. Remaining ammunition is returned to the appropriate boxes and secured in the magazine. Each unit will detach someone to assist the Safety Officers in the process.

\*4:00 p.m. – Camps close. Designates from each unit will meet a Safety Officer at the magazine shed. Unused ammunition is returned.

### **Depot # 2 (British)**

#### **Captain Smith House**

8:00 a.m. – Depot opens

9:30 a.m. – Depot Closes

If for any reason you arrive after this time, it is your responsibility to find a Safety Officer in order to inspect and secure your ammunition in the magazine shed.

1:15 p.m. – Units detach one or two members to Captain Smith House to pick up ammunition boxes and distribute to troops

1:30p.m. – Battalion formation for Tactical Demonstration.

3:00 p.m. – Post demonstration inspection. Remaining ammunition is returned to the appropriate boxes and secured in the magazine. Each unit will detach someone to assist the Safety Officers in the process.

4:00 p.m. – Camps close. Designates from each unit will meet a Safety Officer at the magazine shed. Unused ammunition is returned.